

## Women's Social Movements, Land Conflict, and Ecofeminism: A Study in Jambi Province, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** The continuation of land conflicts has ecological, economic, and social implications. This has motivated women survivors of conflict to organize movements. This study aims to explore the strategies, patterns, and forms of the movement and its meaning in relation to ecofeminism. This research uses qualitative methods. The results of the study show that, first, the women's movement is a reformative movement. Second, the movement's strategies involve protests and framing, mobilizing solidarity through religious activities, and environmental empowerment. These strategies affirm the value of ecofeminism in movements organized by local women. This study concludes that the movement of women survivors of land conflict reflects the ecofeminist movement, by voicing justice at the local level as well as an effort to deconstruct the legacy of agrarian colonialism, which is structurally unequal and gender biased. This study contributes to the study of ecofeminism in Indonesia by enriching the agrarian-based conceptual understanding and experiences of local women's movements.

**Keywords:** ecofeminism; land conflict; social movement; women's movement

**Abstrak:** Konflik lahan yang terus berlanjut memiliki implikasi terhadap ekologis, ekonomi dan deformasi sosial. Ini menjadi motif perempuan penyintas konflik mengorganisir gerakan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi, pola dan bentuk gerakan dan pemaknaannya terhadap ekofeminisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pertama, gerakan perempuan merupakan gerakan reformatif. Kedua, strategi gerakan melibatkan protes dan framing, mobilisasi solidaritas melalui aktivitas keagamaan, dan pemberdayaan lingkungan. Strategi ini menegaskan nilai ekofeminisme dalam gerakan yang diorganisir oleh perempuan lokal. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa gerakan perempuan penyintas konflik lahan merefleksikan gerakan ekofeminisme, dengan menyuarakan keadilan di aras lokal sekaligus sebagai upaya mendekonstruksi warisan kolonialisme agraria yang timpang secara struktural dan bias gender. Studi ini berkontribusi terhadap kajian ekofeminisme di Indonesia dengan memperkaya pemahaman konseptual berbasis agraria dan pengalaman gerakan perempuan lokal.

**Kata Kunci:** ekofeminisme; konflik lahan; gerakan sosial; gerakan perempuan

## A. Introduction

Land conflict goes beyond issues of ownership and resource management. It exacerbates gender inequality and degrades the ecological balance. Both ecological and gender issues are closely intertwined, with their roots in the objectification of women and nature in societies dominated by patriarchal structures.<sup>1</sup> Gender inequality and ecological balance are critical issues in shaping the structural vulnerabilities faced by women,<sup>2</sup> especially in the areas affected by land conflicts. Inequality in the land ownership and management has had multidimensional impacts on women, affecting them socially, economically, and environmentally. Therefore, research on how women struggle to survive and engage in social resistance movements is critical to explore and analyze. Women's movements are important to be revealed and discussed because this movement reveal the intersections between gender inequality, environmental degradation, and power relations that shape the dynamics of social resistance. This context is the basis of this study, which explains and reflects on women's movements and ecofeminism.

Prior research has established a strong foundation for understanding women's movements and ecofeminism which can be mapped into two contexts. First, studies that focus on ecofeminism movements in the context of mining and development, as discussed by Mendoza et al,<sup>3</sup> Nagari,<sup>4</sup> Sharma,<sup>5</sup> Oktarina and Yulianti.<sup>6</sup> These studies emphasize that extractive industrialization and

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<sup>1</sup> Manjula Mallya M. and V. Basil Hans, "Unveiling Environmental Challenges and Concerns in India through an Ecofeminist Lens," *Al-Shodhana* 12, no. 2 (2024): 38–53, <https://doi.org/10.70644/as.v12.i2.3>.

<sup>2</sup> Clare E. B. Cannon and Kristin Babson Dobbin, "Unpacking Sustainability," *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* 10, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2022.00038>.

<sup>3</sup> Lourdes Sofía Mendoza Bohne and Martha Patricia Aceves Márquez, "Territorios en Conflicto Socioambiental, Resistencias y Movimientos Ambientalistas En Jalisco, México Desde El Ecofeminismo," *Espiral Estudios Sobre Estado y Sociedad* 31, no. 89 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.32870/ees.v31i89.7367>.

<sup>4</sup> Hajeng Pandu Nagari, "Gerakan Sosial Ekofeminisme Melawan Penambangan Marmer di Gunung Mutis Nusa Tenggara Timur," *Ijd-Demos* 2, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.37950/ijd.v2i1.33>.

<sup>5</sup> Kumkum Sharma Sharma, "Displacement, Identity and Existence: An Ecofeminist Study of the Socio-Ethnic Conflicts in the Primal Land," *New Literaria* 5, no. 1 (2024): 66–74, <https://doi.org/10.48189/nl.2024.v05i1.009>.

<sup>6</sup> Tri Nurmega Oktarina and Anisa Yulianti, "The Role of Women in Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection: A Discourse of Ecofeminisme in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Environmental Law and Sustainable Development* 1, no. 2 (2022): 107–38, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijel.v1i2.58137>.

modernization serve as the primary catalysts for ecofeminist movements, which emerge across diverse societal landscapes both within Indonesia and on a global scale. Second, studies by Rao,<sup>7</sup> Madhavan,<sup>8</sup> and Anjum.<sup>9</sup> These studies focus on ecofeminist movements in the context of environmental destruction and the privatization of public spaces, violations of private space and feminine identity in the context of indigenous communities. Third, studies by Sultana,<sup>10</sup> Nicoson,<sup>11</sup> Lawrence.<sup>12</sup> These studies focus on how women's embodied ecological knowledge and everyday practices shape social movements addressing climate inequality, land rights, and environmental governance. These studies show that ecofeminist perspectives not only critique extractivism and environmental destruction but also illuminate how climate injustice and power asymmetries across gender, race, and class are reproduced and contested through grassroots activism and policy engagement.

Ecofeminism currently has significant trends and research relationships at both the local and global levels. This can be seen in Figure 1. The illustration shows that ecofeminism literature is connected and closely related to gender studies, feminism, environmental justice, and various other theoretical approaches. In addition, the discourse on ecofeminism is centered on combining gender and environmental issues and is developing discourse in a more specific direction, namely the integration of ecofeminism with environmental policy, social movements, and cultural studies. Furthermore, the studies discussing ecofeminism movements and land conflicts as reviewed in the existing literature above generally focus on issues of development, modernization, environmental degradation, and privatization. Thus, studies on

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<sup>7</sup> Manisha Rao, "Rethinking the Ecofeminist Discourse: View from the Western Ghats, India," *Représentations Dans Le Monde Anglophone*, no. 26 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.35562/rma.270>.

<sup>8</sup> Anugraha Madhavan and Sharmila Narayana, "Violation of Land as Violation of Feminine Space: An Ecofeminist Reading of Mother Forest and Mayilamma," *Tattva Journal of Philosophy* 12, no. 2 (2021): 13–32, <https://doi.org/10.12726/tjp.24.2>.

<sup>9</sup> Tasneem Anjum, "Ecofeminism: Exploitation of Women and Nature," *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 5, no. 4 (2020): 846–48, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.54.2>.

<sup>10</sup> Farhana Sultana, "Embodied Intersectionalities of Urban Citizenship: Water, Infrastructure, and Gender in the Global South," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110, no. 5 (2020): 1407–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1715193>.

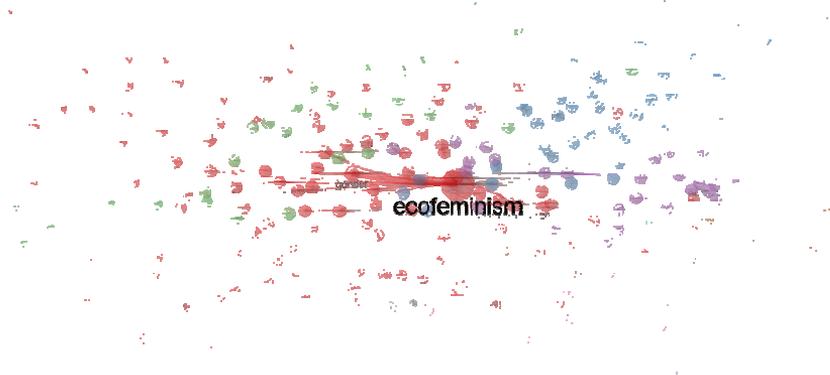
<sup>11</sup> Christie Nicoson, "Towards Climate Resilient Peace: An Intersectional and Degrowth Approach," *Sustainability Science* 16, no. 4 (2021): 1147–58, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00906-1>.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer L. Lawrence et al., "Feminist Approaches to Environmental Politics," *Contemporary Political Theory* 24, no. 1 (2025): 81–97, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00707-y>.

ecofeminism and women's movements in the context of land conflicts particularly those related to the struggle for land rights and environmental conservation threatened by private company domination are still lacking comprehensively revealed. Therefore, based on the above studies, this study essentially complements the existing literature on land conflicts. Specifically, the context of Jambi society as far as research in the literature review has not identified a comprehensive conceptualization of how women's movements and ecofeminism in relation to land conflicts. This study aims to explore the strategies, patterns, and forms of women's movements within the context of protracted land conflict cases and the interpretation in ecofeminism perspective. Therefore, an analysis of ecofeminism, women's movements, and land conflicts is critical and relevant to investigate.

The women's movement that was organized can be sociologically seen as a catalyst for fighting and strengthening their rights as women, the rights of local communities affected by conflict and the environment in which they live. This movement is seen as strategic for strengthening and complementing previous social movements that were undertaken by local communities in general without the involvement of women.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 1  
Trends in Ecofeminism Topics and Research Relationships



Source: Processed by the Author using the R.

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<sup>13</sup> Muliono Muliono, Citra Darminto, and Mariatul Qibtiyah, "Land Conflict and Social Movement of Local Community: A Study in Jambi Province," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 14, no. 1 (2025): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish.v14i1.85193>.

This study focuses on the following two research questions. First, what are the forms and patterns of collective action undertaken by women's community groups at the local level? Second, what strategies do they use to resist and advocate for gender, socioeconomic, and environmental justice? This study is based on the argument that the movement of women conflict survivors is not only a form of voicing justice over land, but also a form of reconstructing the relationship between women and nature as a form of resistance against structural gender bias and the legacy of agrarian colonialism.

## **B. Method**

This study uses qualitative methods to explore the experiences of women conflict survivors involved in land conflicts in Muaro Jambi Regency, specifically in Kumpeh Ulu District, chosen for its high intensity of land conflict and active women's movements. The research emphasizes the contextual relevance of land conflicts and women's movements in Jambi Province. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and observations, focusing on the dynamics of conflict and the organized social movements. The study particularly highlights the 'emic' perspectives of women participants from the Padek Women's Community (PEPA).

The study was conducted throughout 2024–2025. The primary informants included PEPA women, the Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA) of Jambi Province, farmer groups, and community actors with expertise in land conflicts and relevant social movements. This study used purposive sampling in selecting the informants. It involved the intentional selection of informants based on particular criteria such as knowledge, experience, and other aspects that are relevant to the research problem, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Informant selection was based on their ability and competence in providing information related to the research issues conducted.

Meanwhile, data analysis in this study used Miles and Huberman's approach. Miles and Huberman offer several stages in analyzing data they are, first, data reduction; second, data display; and third, drawing conclusions and verification.<sup>14</sup> The analysis was further informed by the methods offered by

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<sup>14</sup> M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (California: SAGE Publications, 2014), 9.

Saldana<sup>15</sup> in conducting qualitative data analysis, namely coding, memoing, and concept mapping. First, “coding” is the process by which researchers classify or categorize data in connection with various retrieval systems. Therefore, Babbie defines coding as a physical action. Second, “memoing” is the simultaneous note-taking or recording of data obtained in the field. Third, “concept mapping” is the effort to connect the concepts with data. Based on this approach, the study applies the systematic analytical framework that ensures conceptual coherence and analytical rigor in examining ecofeminism and women’s movements in land conflicts. Furthermore, this approach not only facilitate an understanding of empirical realities and the perspectives of local communities (women) but also illustrates the interconnections between fundamental concepts emerging from field data that explain ecofeminism and the patterns, forms, and strategies of women’s movements among land conflict survivors in Jambi Province.

### C. Result and Discussion

Ecofeminism and the movement of women conflict survivors demonstrate how women play a strategic role in addressing ecological crises and structural injustice. Ecofeminism emphasizes the connection between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. The environmental damage cannot be separated from gender bias and the capitalist patriarchal system. The movement organized by women conflict survivors demonstrates the practical application of ecofeminism principles in which women do not only strive for survival but also organize a collective resistance, build communities, and reconstruct the relationship between humans and nature. Accordingly, this highlights the symbiotic relationship between ecofeminism as a conceptual framework and the mobilization of women conflict survivors as its empirical manifestation; both are instrumental in advancing the dual objectives of ecological justice and gender parity.

The women’s movement is organized by a group of women within the PEPA community, also known as *Perempuan Padek*. PEPA is an informal organization of women farmers located in Sumber Jaya Village, Kumpeh Ulu

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<sup>15</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2021), 3, 44.

District, Muaro Jambi Regency, Indonesia. Established in 2023, the organization aims to advocate for land rights and promote the social empowerment of the women's community. The women's movement organized is motivated by the continuity of land conflicts that is seen as degrading their existence as indigenous people in social, gender, economic, and environmental terms. This movement is organized by women in response to several recurring situations namely: first, policies that enable the perpetuation of land ownership claims and fuel conflicts. Second, the conflicts that arise have multidimensional impacts, one of which affects gender aspects. Third, corporate control and land use are not only threaten the extinction of their land but also contaminate the environment where they farm and sustain their livelihoods. These three contexts motivate women in local communities to become involved in social movements that highlight struggles over land as well as broader ecological dimensions. The movements undertaken follow the patterns and strategies which will be further explained in the empirical findings of this study.

### **Land Conflicts, Patterns, and Forms of Women's Movements**

Land conflicts represent one of the most persistent social and environmental challenges in many regions, as they often involve competing claims between local communities, corporations, and state authorities.<sup>16</sup> Within these conflicts, distinct patterns can be identified, ranging from disputes over ownership and access to natural resources to struggles shaped by historical injustices and structural inequalities. Women, in particular, play a significant role in responding to these challenges, as their everyday lives are directly tied to land, food security, and ecological sustainability. The forms of women's movements that emerge in this context are diverse, ranging from collective protests and community-based initiatives to the creation of alternative agricultural practices. These movements not only contest the structures of dispossession but also redefine the relationship between women, land, and the environment, positioning women as strategic actors in both resistance and transformation.

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<sup>16</sup> Arnim Scheidel et al., "Environmental Conflicts and Defenders: A Global Overview," *Global Environmental Change* 63 (2020): 102104, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102104>.

In the context of Jambi Province, historically, land conflicts in Jambi Province have occurred alongside the presence of private entities managing and owning plantation lands. According to data released by the Land Reform Consortium (KPA) in 2024, Jambi Province contributes to one of the largest conflicts in Indonesia, and at the regional level, Indonesia ranks highest among six Asian countries.<sup>17</sup> This conflict trend has been fairly stable in recent years until 2025, ranking third nationally and among the top five provinces in terms of conflict area size.<sup>18</sup> This conflict has at least three contexts. First, ecological impact; second, social impact; third, economic impact. These three contexts are explained as follows.

First, ecologically, land acquisition and management have caused environmental degradation in local communities. Since the expansion of plantations, especially oil palm plantations, primary forests and peatlands have been converted into monoculture industrial land. The clearing and management of this land has caused a clean water crisis due to water pollution from plantation waste and disruption to community plantation systems. This situation underscores that the ecological impacts of land issues are not merely physical damage to the local community's environment but also a threat to the sustainability of local ecosystems. In other words, this has implications for changes in the microclimate of local communities that previously depended on the sustainability of forest ecosystems.

Second, the social impact of land conflicts. Land conflicts in Jambi Province are rooted in the expansion of agribusiness capital beyond material and legal dimensions. This conflict has created new problems, namely the deterioration of local community social relations. The presence of corporations at the local level has triggered internal polarization and restructured community social relations. This is evident from the communal solidarity that previously served as the social foundation, which has undergone changes marked by horizontal conflict. The disruption occurred with the emergence of two opposing groups; the pro-company group and the land preservation group. As a result, relations among community members at the local level have become strained. This

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<sup>17</sup> Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, "Konflik Agraria di Indonesia Tertinggi dari Enam Negara Asia," February 27, 2024, <https://www.kpa.or.id/2024/02/konflik-agraria-di-indonesia-tertinggi-dari-enam-negara-asia/>.

<sup>18</sup> Raden Ariyo Wicaksono, "KPA: Konflik Agraria Naik 21%," *Betahita.id*, January 23, 2025, <https://betahita.id/news/detail/10870/kpa-konflik-agraria-naik-21-.html?v=1737597573>.

transformation indicates that land conflicts are no longer limited to the vertical dimension (between society and corporations) but have also evolved into horizontal conflicts within the community itself.

Third, economic impacts in the form of land ownership and management. Land ownership and management are major factors in the emergence of conflicts. This context has economic impacts in the form of access to land, disruption of productivity, and limited sources of livelihood for local communities. Land conflicts have caused a decline in the agricultural, plantation, and natural resource-based businesses of local communities. This context reinforces economic inequality and limits the opportunities for communities to build economic independence based on local values. These aspects directly determine access to resources, patterns of production, and the distribution of economic benefits within a community. Unequal land tenure systems often reinforce social hierarchies, limiting opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly women and smallholder farmers, to participate in decision-making and secure sustainable livelihoods.

In this context, the women's movement emerged as a response and resistance to the conditions and discrimination they experienced throughout the land conflict. The three aforementioned conditions and the conflict situation posed serious challenges for women. Traditionally, women in local communities, in addition to being housewives, also play a central role in maintaining the economic resilience of their families. This dual role is not limited to domestic activities but also includes active involvement in agricultural activities, food resource management, and environmental maintenance or what is categorized as ecological activities. Therefore, the vulnerability experienced by women in the vortex of land conflicts is centered on themselves as individuals, the socio-economic stability of their families, and their wider community.

The movement organized by women survivors of land conflicts demonstrates a collective effort to assert their rights to land and the environment. In the concept of social movements, social movements can be categorized in various ways based on their objectives and the level of change they wish to achieve. David Aberle<sup>19</sup> categorizes forms of movement based on

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<sup>19</sup> John Thomas McGuire, "Using Typology to Classify Social Movements: Feminism in Two Contexts," *The American Sociologist* 56, no. 2 (2025): 373-87, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-024-09634-2>.

who they want to change and how much change they want to achieve. Based on Aberle's concept, social movements are classified into four types namely revolutionary, alternative, reformative, and redemptive. In the context of this research, the movement of women survivors of land conflicts is a reformative movement, characterized by their actions and the content of their demands.

“... what we need, our demands, are an end to the criminalization and intimidation of us as farmers, a fair resolution to the land conflict between our village and PT, and an immediate end to the blocking of access to the purchase of palm fruit owned and harvested by the community.”<sup>20</sup>

The data reveals that the local women's community demands are not limited to material needs but encompass legal, political, and economic dimensions of justice. The call to end criminalization and intimidation underscores the violence inherent in agrarian conflicts, where state apparatus or corporate actors use coercion to suppress women's community resistance.

Furthermore, the women's movement, based on the data above, focuses on reform in aspects related to land ownership, namely law, politics, and economics. Furthermore, this movement emphasizes partial changes in the context of discrimination, intimidation, and justice in terms of land ownership and management. Their actions are directed at policy aspects so that they are more favorable to the interests of women, the environment, and local communities. The statements of demands as shown in the data above reflect the articulation that stems from their direct experiences as survivors of land conflicts. The rejection of criminalization and intimidation shows the existence of repressive practices experienced as a result of unequal power relations between corporations, officials, and the community. Moreover, the women's movement is not merely demanding access to land, but also striving to reconstruct social-ecological justice relations that have been largely ignored. Meanwhile, the rejection of the blockade on access to purchase palm oil fruits illustrates how land conflicts directly impact the economic sustainability of women's households. This blockade practice can be understood as a repressive measure that narrows the living space of communities, while also emphasizing the economic and political dimensions of the land conflicts occurring.

Based on the aforementioned points, the form of women's movements in land conflicts asserts a collective effort to advocate for policy changes without

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with women land conflict survivors on April 18, 2025

entirely opposing the existing system. These movements emerge as a response to the impacts of land conflicts that exacerbate gender injustice and ecological degradation. Thus, women's movements reflect a resistance rooted in lived experience, articulating reformatory demands for agrarian justice.

### **Social Movement's Strategies Organized by Women Survivors of Conflict**

Social movements are a collective, organized, and sustained effort aimed at promoting social change both in terms of structural aspects such as policy and public awareness.<sup>21</sup> Social movements depend on the strategies they employ.<sup>22</sup> The selection of strategies is a crucial element in determining the effectiveness and success of a movement. Strategies reflect how movements interpret situations, build support, and direct collective action. In the context of this study, the strategies of women survivors of land conflict are categorized into three types, namely; framing and protest actions, mobilization of solidarity through religious values, and environmental empowerment movements.

#### ***Framing and Protest***

In the study of social movements, framing refers to the process of shaping, packaging, and communicating an issue or social reality in such a way that it can be understood, accepted, and to motivate as collective action.<sup>23</sup> Framing serves as an instrument for building shared meaning among members while influencing public perception and stakeholders' views on the issue at hand. Some forms of framing in the movement of women survivors of land conflicts include framing their experiences of injustice into narratives such as "return our land," "be a fair leader," and "stop criminalization." Furthermore, women in this context not only voice their access to land, but also frame the social and emotional impacts, such as loss of food sources, damage to the household environment, and increased domestic burdens because some of their family members are detained by state apparatus due to land conflict issues. This framing emphasizes that "land conflict is not just an issue of land grabbing, but

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<sup>21</sup> David R. Zeller, "Social Movements," in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict* (Elsevier, 2022), 534–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-820195-4.00258-2>.

<sup>22</sup> Zeller.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Ciurel, "The Framing of Protest," *Professional Communication and Translation Studies* 11 (2023): 7–15, <https://doi.org/10.59168/BFJ3729>.

also a violation of the right to a more decent life.” Protests were held on the streets as a manifestation of this framing. Women protested by demonstrating and blocking roads leading to company locations and areas they assert as their rights, as well as government agencies.

The practice of framing in the women survivors of land conflict movement as revealed aims to transform experiences of injustice into collective narratives capable of mobilizing joint action. Through slogans such as “return our land” and “stop criminalization,” women not only emphasize the issue of access to land but also highlight the social, economic, and emotional impacts caused by the conflict, such as the loss of food sources, damage to household environments, and increased domestic burdens due to the detention of family members. This framing emphasizes that land conflicts are not merely a matter of land grabbing but a violation of the right to a more decent life. Thus, demonstrations and road blockades become a form of collective resistance that not only demands justice but also challenges exploitative power structures.

### ***Mobilizing Solidarity through Religious Activities***

Mass mobilization in social movements is the process of mobilizing and organizing a group of people to actively engage in collective action to achieve specific social change. Mobilization plays an important role in spreading a political agenda and encouraging social transformation.<sup>24</sup> Mass mobilization is seen as an indicator of the strength and legitimacy of a movement. The quantity and solidarity of participants can influence public perception and the response of the movement's target audience. In the context of this study, mass mobilization took the form of solidarity mobilization through religious activities. This movement utilizes religious values, symbols, and identities to build a sense of collective identity and encourage collective participation among women. In this context, religion serves as a meaningful framework that legitimizes the morality of the movement's validity. Solidarity mobilization through religious activities is considered easier and less costly.

Based on this context, religion becomes one of the sources of narrative in mobilizing support to strengthen solidarity because it touches on the

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<sup>24</sup> Farooq Ahmad Dar, Muhammad Sajid Khan, and Muhammad Abrar Zahoore, “Mass Mobilization in Indian Politics: A Case Study of Non-Cooperation Movement,” *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 10, no. 2 (2021): 13–25, <https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v10i2.3076>.

dimensions of values and beliefs in individuals and communities. These values strengthen the legitimacy of the women's movement. The movement takes the form of religious study groups and majelis taklim (Islamic study circles), as spaces for mobilizing women's solidarity. In other words, these informal spaces provide a place to gather, resources, and a space for communication. Mobilizing solidarity through religious activities gives ethical weight to their movement and at the same time strengthens social resistance against state and corporate apparatus. This practice of religious solidarity can be seen in religious study groups, communal prayers, and the organization of religious activities to pray for the safety of land and nature. Through these religious activities, women can build emotional bonds, strengthen their courage to face discriminatory practices, and simultaneously create a psychologically safe space together. Mobilizing solidarity through religious activities not only strengthens the support base among local women but also develops a framing of the land conflict. That is, the land conflict they are facing is portraying it as shared moral issue, not merely an issue of a small community.

### ***Environmental Empowerment Movement***

The environmental empowerment movement refers to a collective movement that focuses on increasing the capacity of individuals and communities to preserve, manage, and defend their environment from threats of degradation, overexploitation, and unfair policies. This movement is not merely about environmental advocacy but also emphasizes empowerment, the process of strengthening critical awareness, knowledge, skills, and community control over the natural resources that sustain their lives.

The environmental empowerment movement carried out by women survivors of land conflicts positions women as key actors in preserving and managing the environment in which they live. Environmental empowerment takes the form of joint tree planting, forming organic farming groups, developing community food gardens, and managing environmental waste. This environmental empowerment movement is carried out amidst land claims between corporations and local communities. The strategies implemented aim to preserve the environment and enhance women's economic independence amid the conflicts they face. Simultaneously, these actions serve as a form of resistance against exploitative production systems that damage their environment. These environmental empowerment initiatives also serve as a

means for local women to assert that the land they cultivate, even in areas claimed by corporations, represents their own land rights.

The movement above is manifested through various community-based initiatives. Within the movement, there are interrelated social, political, and ecological dimensions. Socially, this movement strengthens community solidarity. Politically, it challenges unfair power structures in resource management, and. Ecologically, it contributes to environmental sustainability.

Moreover, the dynamics of women's movements can be understood as a distinct articulation of both classical and contemporary social movement theories.<sup>25</sup> From a classical perspective, particularly the traditions of resource mobilization and political process theory, these movements reflect the ability of female actors to leverage organizational networks, political opportunities, and moral legitimacy to push for gradual policy change. Meanwhile, the contemporary new social movements approach emphasizes how women's daily experiences as subjects directly impacted by land conflict and environmental degradation form the basis of the movement's identity, meaning, and claims. Women's struggles, therefore, are not merely oriented toward material redistribution, but also serve as a structural critique of patriarchal power relations that normalize natural exploitation and the marginalization of women. The movement of women survivors of land conflict represents both a material interest-based struggle and a symbolic-normative one, where agrarian justice, ecological sustainability, and gender emancipation are positioned as interconnected agendas.

The context indicates that the environmental empowerment movement organized by women survivors of land conflicts is a strategy for ecological preservation and a multidimensional effort that integrates social, political, and economic resistance. This multidimensional orientation emerges from the ways in which lived environmental experience informs collective action and shapes the dynamics of mobilization. The movement is closely linked to how women's embodied ecological knowledge plays a role in constructing and forming social movements.<sup>26</sup> By engaging in activities such as tree planting, organic farming,

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<sup>25</sup> Ernesto Castañeda, "Charles Tilly's Theories about the Origins of European Nation-States, Social Movements, Contentious Politics, and Democracy," *American Behavioral Scientist* 69, no. 7 (2025): 921–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642231194871>.

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence et al, "Feminist Approaches to Environmental Politics."

community food production, and waste management, women demonstrate their agency in defending land rights, sustaining livelihoods, and strengthening community resilience. These practices show that empowerment is achieved through both practical environmental actions and collective solidarity, which simultaneously function as resistance against exploitative systems and as an affirmation of local autonomy over natural resources. Thus, the movement highlights how women's initiatives in conflict-affected areas are transformative, as they reframe survival struggles into organized actions that contribute to environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic independence.

### **Interpreting Ecofeminism and the Movement of Women Survivors of Land Conflicts**

Ecofeminism and the movement of women survivors of land conflicts, as found in this study, demonstrate that the continuity and relatively stable trend of conflicts from year to year have a significant impact on the existence and subsistence of women, as well as the threat of environmental degradation and loss of land ownership. The relatively stable trend of conflicts reflects that the roots of land conflicts are not incidental but systemic and directly related to the existence of women at the local level. In other words, environmental issues are directly linked to women's lives. As explained by Doley,<sup>27</sup> women, from an ecofeminist perspective, have a closer historical, cultural, and emotional connection to nature. According to Alice and Mohanraj,<sup>28</sup> ecofeminism advocates for the liberation of women and the environment and criticizes various forms of interrelated oppression that impact women and the environment. Therefore, ecological degradation cannot be separated from gender inequality. Both have their roots in the same power structure, namely domination and unequal hierarchy.

Based on the reality of the above movement, women are not only a vulnerable group in conflict situations but also act as actors taking on new roles to carry out the movement. The movements of women survivors of land

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<sup>27</sup> Himajyoti Doley, "Variants of Ecofeminism: An Overview," *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research* 7, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i01.36445>.

<sup>28</sup> C. Alice Evangaline Jebaselvi and K. Mohanraj, "The Feminine Face of Environmental Activism: An Ecofeminist Perspective," *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities* 12, no. S2-July (2024): 83–88, <https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v12iS2-July.7943>.

conflicts, in terms of their patterns, forms, and organized strategies, reflect the core values of ecofeminism and social resistance against capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism. This is evident in two contexts. First, women's movements in advocating for rights to land, the environment, and subsistence sustainability. In this regard, as noted by Mies,<sup>29</sup> women are strategic actors positioned as agents of transformation. Women's involvement in ecologically-based movements represents their direct experience in managing natural resources for the subsistence of families and communities. Second, the exploitation of nature and discrimination against women. This is related to capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism.

Patriarchal domination describes a tendency in decision-making related to land in the political and economic spheres that marginalizes women's voices. Furthermore land, which is the arena of conflict, is often perceived as a commodity whose value is dominant for market interests rather than as a living space that supports the sustainability of local communities in general and women in particular. These patterns of control reflect a colonial system in which land tends to follow the logic of control and resource extraction, taking from the weak (local communities) for the interests of those in power.<sup>30</sup> This context reflects a situation where ongoing land conflicts are not merely agrarian issues but also part of an oppression structure as a legacy of colonialism.

In this regard, the movement of women survivors of land conflicts, both in terms of patterns and organized strategies, is a form of counter-hegemonic practice. This means emphasizing the strengthening of community solidarity through local knowledge, such as culture and religion, to resist extractive realities and the inhumane commercialization of resources. This This practice is not only interpreted as resistance but also as a counter-hegemonic action rooted in a local value perspective.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the women's movement's struggle for land rights, environmental protection, and the sustainability of local

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<sup>29</sup> Silvia Petrova, "Ecofeminism – Historical Development and Perspectives," *Istoriya-History* 32, no. 6 (2024): 494–504, <https://doi.org/10.53656/his2024-6-4-eco>; See: Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Books, 1993).

<sup>30</sup> Melek Kaymaz Mert, "Looking at Post-Colonial Feminism: A Reading through the Views of Maria Mies," *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 24, no. 2 (2024): 583–96, <https://doi.org/10.18037/ausbd.1415813>.

<sup>31</sup> Dani Filc, "Is Resistance Always Counter-Hegemonic?," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 26, no. 1 (2021): 23–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2020.1825281>.

communities shows that ecological issues cannot be separated from the context of social justice. This is seen from the motives of the movement, which are rooted in the context of economically valuable land management and ecological awareness. In this context, the movement of women survivors of land conflicts is not only a form of voicing justice over land but also a form of resistance against structural gender bias as a legacy of agrarian colonialism.

The findings of this study differ from existing studies on ecofeminism that focus on issues of development, modernization, environmental degradation, and privatization.<sup>32</sup> It also differs from the study that asserts the existence of power asymmetries between gender and race.<sup>33</sup>

The findings indicate that women's movements in land conflict settings extend beyond claims for land justice, constituting a transformative reconfiguration of women-nature relations that challenges structural gender bias and enduring agrarian colonial legacies. The legacy of agrarian colonialism illustrates the long-term implications of the system of land ownership, management, and utilization that influences the current agrarian structure and social relations, with the main characteristics being the marginalization of women and local communities, land ownership inequality, conflict, and an extractive economic orientation. As confirmed in the study by Lambrecht et al.,<sup>34</sup> the legacy of agrarian colonialism is not merely institutional history, but a structural mechanism that continues to reproduce tenure injustice, social conflict, and the marginalization of women for the sake of an extractive economic orientation.

Given the potential and massive systemic inequalities that affect women and local communities, the role of the state (political will) is essential in

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<sup>32</sup> Bohne and Márquez, "Territorios En Conflicto Socioambiental, Resistencias y Movimientos Ambientalistas En Jalisco, México Desde El Ecofeminismo"; Oktarina and Yulianti, "The Role of Women in Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection: A Discourse of Ecofeminisme in Indonesia"; Rao, "Rethinking the Ecofeminist Discourse: View from the Western Ghats, India"; Sharma, "Displacement, Identity and Existence: An Ecofeminist Study of the Socio-Ethnic Conflicts in the Primal Land."

<sup>33</sup> Sultana, "Embodied Intersectionalities of Urban Citizenship: Water, Infrastructure, and Gender in the Global South"; Nicoson, "Towards Climate Resilient Peace: An Intersectional and Degrowth Approach."

<sup>34</sup> Isabel Brigitte Lambrecht et al., "Gender Gaps in Land Rights: Explaining Different Measures and Why Households Differ in Myanmar," *Agricultural Economics* 54, no. 5 (2023): 728–41, <https://doi.org/10.1111/agec.12789>.

minimizing discrimination in land management and ownership. The presence of the state is also essential in accommodating the empowerment of women and in responding to communities to respond to the voices of women at the local level. Omang et al.<sup>35</sup> also state that women's empowerment can be achieved if they are given the freedom to make decisions and act on available opportunities without fear. This study emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports gender equality and access to empowerment resources. In line with this, the critical findings in this study can also be used as lessons for various elements of society and state apparatus in positioning various community demands as the basis for policies promoting justice and breaking colonial patterns. Therefore, the knowledge and awareness of society, state apparatus, and corporations in understanding the existence of land within a social system and legal system are also important contexts in minimizing the spread of systemic injustice.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This paper addresses the critical research problem of assessing the impact of land conflict on local communities, with particular attention to women's social movements among land-conflict-affected communities. Although at the local level, this issue reflects a global problem that is rooted in ecofeminism. The primary objective was highlight how women at the local level survive and resistance by organizing a social movement based on ecological values and utilizing their local knowledge to mobilize the strenght of solidarity. The movement of women survivors of land conflicts in this study reflects three critical findings. First, the continuity of land conflicts has implications not only for socioeconomic issues but also for ecological issues. Second, the movement of women survivors of land conflicts is carried out through strategies based on local knowledge in the form of solidarity movements, protests, and environmental empowerment. This movement reflects a reformative movement. Third, the movement of women survivors of land conflicts is not only a form of voicing justice over land, but also a form of resistance against structural gender bias as a legacy of agrarian colonialism. In this context, the

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas Achoda Omang et al., "Women Barriers and Empowerment Opportunities in the Nigerian Context," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 28, no. 4 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.28.4.37>.

movement of women survivors of land conflicts reflects an ecofeminist movement at the local level.

The implications of these findings are profound. They underline and emphasize that women's movements are crucial to carry out, reveal, and discuss in terms of their importance in contributing to advancing understanding of new social movements and, in practical terms, to the resolution of land conflicts that have a significant impact on local communities and particularly on women and ecology. However, this research also acknowledges limitations, specifically being confined to explaining the forms and strategies of women's movements and their meaning in relation to ecofeminism. However, the limitations are expected to serve as a basis for further research, especially those that seek to explain the mobilization of resources and political opportunities in interpreting issues related to women survivors of conflict by conducting more intensive interviews to obtain a more reflective and subjective understanding. In conclusion, this study emphasizes that the movement of women affected by land conflict reflects an ecofeminist orientation that links demands for justice with a broader critique of gendered and colonial agrarian structures.[s]

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